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The Nature and Calling of the Church

Review Article

The Nature and Calling of the Church

THE VEN. T. D. SULLY

I AM very glad to commend to readers of 'News and Views' this addition to the "Christian Students' Library" from the pen of our Editor, the Rev. W. Stewart, since, while intended for students in our Theological Colleges, it will be of special interest and value for all concerned with Church Union. Though he does not overload the book with references to plans of union, it is written throughout by one who is deeply concerned with our 'Plan' for North India and Pakistan. "In India," he writes in his preface, "this whole movement is a matter of real urgency, for India is a country in which the painful and frustrating consequences of Christian divisions have been acutely felt." It will be of special value to our future clergy to have this book on the nature of the Church set against that background.

One may go further and say that it is the general ecumenical movement which has made possible such a book. The fact that students and staff from different denominational backgrounds have been brought together at Serampore, and in other union Colleges, as well as in the activities of the S. C. M., and that Planning for Church Union has brought together in friendly and frank converse, many of the leaders of our Churches, has led to a new appreciation and understanding, even where organic union may still be some way ahead. To write on the doctrine of the Church, its ministry and Sacraments is a fair test of such understanding, and it is a test through which Mr. Stewart comes with a remarkable measure of success. There are few points at which an Anglican could feel that his views have been unfairly or inadequately treated, within the limits of space of such a book, and I think that representatives of other Church traditions will agree in such a verdict.

Controversial issues are in no way avoided, and the treatment of such issues will be found of special value. One might mention the treatment of Believers' Baptism and Infant Baptism (p. 226 seq.), of the Threefold Min-

istry (181 seq.), and of Sacrifice and Priesthood (162-167 and 242) as examples of our author's understanding and balance. Indeed there is a very close connection between the movement towards Church Union and the revived study of the Nature of the Church, and it is by such study, particularly where it can be shared, that a real unity will be promoted and our Churches will really "grow together" under the guidance of the one Holy Spirit. Here I can only suggest a few reflections on a first reading in the hope that it will encourage others to make use of the book.

(1) Some might think that the book attempts to cover too much ground already in a single volume; but one could wish that the section on the Sacraments could be balanced by one on the Word. Throughout the Biblical foundations are constantly referred to and helpfully brought out; but the important aspect of the Church's nature, as bearer and interpreter of the Word, and the responsibility of guarding the faith and order of the Church on that basis might have been made more explicit. And the relation of the tradition of the Church to Holy Scripture and the private judgement of the individual believer are issues of importance in the securing and maintaining of unity. Our author notes (p. 161) "the dangers of an unbalanced or incomplete ministry, which are acute when there is any separation between the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments."

(2) The nature of the Church in history is a subject of special interest which crops up again and again, as we pass from the New Testament evidence, through the work of the reformers to our modern tendencies. Limits of space again prevent any adequate treatment of the development during the fifteen centuries separating the N. T. from the Reformation, and the references to the "medieval period" in Chap. V and on p. 154 are very inadequate, while no suitable books are suggested.

The Church has its share in the mystery of

time. It draws its life from its historic sources in the historic life of its Lord, and the historic event of Pentecost. Yet at the same time it draws its life from an ever-present Lord, from the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in every generation. The nature of its continuity in time involves something more than is involved in the history of an organism or of a human society. Part of the weakness in much of the treatment of the Church is due to an inadequate theology of the Holy Spirit. Mr. Stewart acknowledges his debt to Newbigin's '*Household of God*' in his treatment of this element of continuity. 'If the Church is a 'people', its connected history counts.' (P. 103) And that connected history involves the divine activity throughout.

There is something analogous in the place of Baptism in the individual life. One cannot separate the 'new birth' or the gift of the Spirit at Baptism (whether in infancy or later) from its forward-looking character as the initiating of a pilgrimage in which the Holy Spirit may be increasingly received. As the death on the Cross was an historic event, once for all, yet its power for salvation can be ever-present and re-presented in every celebration of Holy Communion, so there seems to be this mysterious comprehension of time in every saving act of God, a comprehension shadowed forth in the idea of the Covenant and the Covenant people. It is something of this thought which seems to be indicated in the treatment of the "gathered community" on pp. 68-69.

Something of the extent of this historic aspect of the Church is indicated by our Lord's saying (Matt. 8 : 11) "many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." The vision of the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration must have deepened that sense of continuity. So that, in spite of the breach with Judaism and the bitter opposition of the Judaisers, Paul could expect his Gentile friends to regard Abraham as their spiritual father.

(3) We have, I think, lost something of his deep sense of our link with those who have gone before, by the comparative neglect of the doctrine of the Church Triumphant, as contrasted with the present Church Militant here on earth. There is but one allusion on p. 123 to this aspect of the Church, though there is a somewhat more

adequate treatment in connection with Holy Communion (p. 248). The commemorations in the Church's Calendar do help us to hold fast this aspect of the Church, whereby it is not subject to time in the way in which a merely human movement or organisation may begin, have its day, and cease to be. "Where two or three are gathered together" in the Name, there is not only the Lord of the Church in the midst of that momentary gathering, but the whole Church, the Body of which He is the Head.

(4) No doubt there is an element of historic continuity in the fruit of sin, not merely in that of the first sin of Adam, but of any sin which has divided the Church. We are all in one way or another infected with this continuous taint of division, with all the misunderstanding and suspicion which it entails. The very fact that Anglican Bishops at Lambeth have betrayed such eager favour for the way of union proposed for Ceylon has already suggested to some others that they must somehow have yielded too much; and we seem still to be often at the stage when the refusal of one Church to come in might make it easier for the others to achieve union. The 'walls of separation' are very real, and it still calls for a miracle of grace,—the power of the Cross of Christ, to break them down. Union cannot come by any mere human contrivance.

Yet for us that miracle is an ever-present possibility, just because the Church bears this character in history, and where evil may too often seem to prevail for a time, grace will much more prevail, and for the eternal life.

(5) This element of continuity in time enters into the idea of the catholicity of the Church, as Mr. Stewart brings out in the important section beginning on p. 102. We surely cannot picture, by any stretch of imagination, the state of the Church beyond the conditions of time; and it is with the Church on its pilgrim way that we are called to deal. It is in this context that "Christians are fully justified in seeking to express the orderly life of the Church by the reverent use of the means which they are sure that God has given to them. Therefore we accept as the gift of the Holy Ghost the Scriptures written under His inspiration: we are sure that He led our fathers when they framed the Creeds; we use with reverence the Sacraments of the Lord's appointment; we accept

the gift of the ministry which He has never failed to give." (p. 108). Yet, in spite of this carefully worded statement, Mr. Stewart will not allow us to use these means, even all together, as "a final test by which to pass judgement on whether or not others are within the Catholic Church." Yet the one test which, on scriptural grounds, he will allow us—"by their fruits," is notoriously difficult of application.

But we have to remember that we have to deal not merely with the exceptional individual who may show the fruits of the Spirit while neglecting the Sacraments; but a judgement on the corporate fruits in history. The fact that Epicurus commended his teaching by the high moral character of his life is one thing; to accept Epicureanism as a basis for corporate life is another. There is, I feel, more to be said than appears on p. 108 on this subject of the authority of the means by which the Church has lived through its pilgrim course in time.

(6) I doubt whether readers have realised the significance that in an early stage of the formulation of our North India "Basis" we were able to incorporate the statement which appears now in II, 2 of the Plan;—"The Churches which united to constitute the Church of North India/Pakistan were all linked with the Church of apostolic times by an essential continuity of doctrine, of experience and of allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, and by a fellowship in the continued proclaiming of the message of salvation through Him. In different ways they had all sought to maintain continuity with the primitive Church in matters of order."

It is such recognition of the importance of historic continuity, as something which we all in a measure share, which has enabled us to face quite frankly the differing ways in which continuity in order is expressed, as in

particular in the case of the Methodist and Anglican Episcopates; and to recognise that the bringing together of differing traditions may be an enrichment in the historic character of the ministry of a united Church.

We may vary widely in the weight of importance we give to this "horizontal" line in the commission of the ministry, but much is gained through the recognition of how far we hold it in common, and through setting it in the context that "the continuity of the Church with the Apostles is given through the whole area of spiritual life in the Church itself" (p. 121). It was, I think, such recognition that led the Commission on Church Union of the M.C.S.A. in 1954 to put on record that they "see no objection to such extension of authority to Methodist bishops who will serve in the proposed united Church, as will provide for them the 'special link with the early Church' which has been denied to their predecessors in the episcopacy of the Methodist Church."

(7) Those who have been following recent ecumenical trends of thought might wish to see a rather fuller treatment of the relation between the 'mission' of the Church and its unity; particularly in a country which has inherited so disastrous a legacy of separation between 'Church' and 'Mission'. I wonder whether it is really a "commonplace" yet to recognise "that the whole Church is 'sent forth' by its Lord on the great Commission" (p. 123).

(8) Finally, when a second edition is called for, might the work be extended, perhaps, to two volumes, with the second volume treating of Word, Sacraments and Ministry; and certainly the whole should be furnished with a subject index.

"The Nature and Calling of the Church", by William Stewart. (C.L.S.) The Christian Students' Library No. 16. Price Rs. 3.45.

Christians can never pose or present themselves as the Savers of the world. They are no more nor less than the servants of the Saviour and Redeemer.

From *A Theology of the Laity*, by Hendrick Kraemer, published by the Lutterworth Press, London.

The Plan of Union and Baptism

REV. E. L. WENGER

SO MUCH has already been written on this theme that I am reluctant to say more. But the article by my friend and colleague in the February issue of *Church Union: News and Views* shows that there is still misunderstanding on two points. Many will be in accord with the first and third sections of that article: evangelistic challenge is one of the reasons for Baptists earnestly entering negotiations for union, and because our negotiators are alive to the dangers of repeated baptisms they agreed to the safeguards in Appendix B of the Plan. But in section (2) Mr. Stewart seems to miss the spirit in which Baptists have entered the negotiations and to misunderstand what many Baptists have been asking for.

(1) First there seems to be misunderstanding of the spirit of the negotiations. Mr. Stewart points out that the problem under discussion concerns the *practice of the non-Baptists*. Does this imply that Baptists have no right to put a case forward? If so, one could reply that the issues vexing Anglicans are those that concern the *practice of non-Anglicans*, for I do not think that the Anglican concern with the services for unification of the ministry arises out of any feeling of a lack for themselves but rather of what they consider to be the needs of non-Anglican ministers. Mr. Stewart seems to imply that since Baptists can continue their own practice of believer's baptism in the united Church they should be content. But just to allow one group to keep to its own groove is not the way of union, though it may be a way of accommodation.

Through years of ecumenical discussion and co-operation we have come to recognize certain values, e. g. constitutional episcopacy, in one another's polity and liturgical practices and we look forward through union to finding our own life enriched by them. There are other aspects of one another's polity and practice that we do not yet recognize as of value but are prepared to accept in practice without being committed to particular interpretations placed upon them, e. g. the historic episcopate and a place in the Church for infant baptism. Baptists may grant that infant baptism has stood for certain

values which Baptists have sometimes tended to neglect, and these values need to be understood by Baptists. But that being granted, Baptists may still feel that they have something to give to others even if those others do not yet recognize it. Baptists therefore have a great concern in something which affects some who are at present non-Baptists in relation to the nature of baptism. And we look forward in union to further progress in the truth where persons of differing convictions within one fellowship share their insights together.

(2) Mr. Stewart says: "The statement which is incorporated in the Plan as it stands frankly leaves the decision in questions which may arise after union to the ministers of the united Church." Many Baptists doubt if this is really so. For Appendix B has definitely stated that baptism is "unrepeatable in the life of any one person" and that the "ministers of the Church will help such a person to seek the remedy...not by re-baptism but by some other means which effectively re-affirms his Baptism and symbolizes for him his engrafting into Christ." The emphases here show that, even if the decision is left to the ministers of the Church, it is to be within a limit that excludes the possibility of meeting the person's conscientious desire. If a person is still not satisfied para 7 of Appendix B provides that the matter be referred to the Bishop of the diocese "for pastoral advice and direction". Baptists do not ask that the Church "write a provision into its constitution which would open the door for a new Baptism for one baptized below a certain age...". There had indeed been a note in the second edition of the Plan to the effect that principles for the guidance of bishops should be prepared, but on further consideration we had agreed to drop this. What we have all along asked for is an assurance that the phrase in the second edition of the Plan that the matter be referred to the Bishop "for direction" did imply that the Bishop had discretion in certain cases to make *exceptions* to the general rule of the Church that Baptism is unrepeatable, or to allow that baptism be permitted since the person concerned was unshakably convinced that the earlier cere-

mony was not a valid baptism. Instead of any such assurance being given, the phrase in the second edition was amplified at the last meeting of the Negotiating Committee in a direction precisely opposite to what we desired, for it now reads "for pastoral advice and direction". The insertion of the words "pastoral advice" suggests that the Bishop will try again to do what the parish minister had failed to do. We find that this phrase is interpreted by non-Baptists as meaning that the Bishop can only say *non possumus* to the person's own request, though he may offer various substitutes.

to be written into the Constitution but we wish to know in what spirit the leaders of other negotiating churches interpret the existing phrases in the Constitution, and in what spirit we may expect the ministers of the united Church to apply them. Will it be in a liberal spirit willing to be led by the Holy Spirit even if one's first re-action is "Not so, Lord, I have never...", or in a spirit that is bound by a rigorous interpretation of the letter of para 2 of the Appendix B? If, in reality, the Plan as it stands "frankly leaves the decision" to the ministers of the united Church, many of us would be content.

We are not asking for rules or provisions

But does it?

From another Point of View:

On the eve of their wedding, the young man plucked up his courage to tell his bride something which he felt she ought to know.

"My dear," said he, "before we get married I think I should tell you that I'm a somnambulist."

"Don't let that bother you," was the answer, "I happen to be a Methodist myself, but we can easily go to your church one Sunday and to mine the other."

One in Christ

"One thing must be said first of all: Christ is the living Lord also over the division. This is not a casual and simply pious way of speaking, but a completely necessary conclusion from that gospel of Christ which comes to us out of the New Testament. Christ is Lord—also over that church which has been invaded by division and strife. He does His work throughout this church; even its division He will and does use in His service. Just as sinful disunity is a mystery (*mysterium iniquitatis*), so the power of Christ in a divided church is a mystery, a mystery of grace and mercy.

Before there can be any talk of unity, of the ecumenical movement, or of the community between the churches, there stands the confession of Christ as the Lord. And this will—strange as it may sound—give witness to the fact that in Him we are already one church, we are already one.....

Our efforts toward unity inevitably become forced whenever unity is seen as something we have to work out. In our common confession of Christ as Lord, we are released from this compulsion. In the same moment a mighty truth is heard: In Christ you are already one. In Christ the "churches" are also united into one body. Out of this alone comes the command: Become that which you are. Work on that which already is a reality in Christ."

Extract from K. E. Skydsgaard: *One in Christ*, a book on the agreements and differences of Protestant and Catholic, published by the Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia.

Lambeth 1958, and our Plan of Church Union

THE RIGHT REV. A. W. LUTHER

THE Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan as published in its Third Revised Edition 1957 is submitted to the Negotiating Churches for their decision. Many years of prayerful preparations have gone into it, and those who were responsible for producing it thought that they had taken into consideration all sides of the question and that therefore the Plan as it now stands should be acceptable to the Churches participating in the union. They did not expect or rather they did not want the Churches to suggest any modifications. In the light of later happenings however, it is seen that their expectations have not been justified. Requests for changes have been made. But that is no reason for disappointment, discouragement or dismay. On the other hand it may be a great help. In trying to become one we are aiming at a very important step, and we will do well to satisfy the participants in as many points as possible without doing violence to any of the essentials. The Uniting Churches have to look two ways. On the one hand they want to unite with their brethren in this country, and on the other they would like to avoid anything that is likely to mean a break with the Parent Churches. This is surely understandable. Unity in one direction must not cause disunity in some other direction. This natural desire to maintain full and unbroken communion with the Parent Churches is interpreted by some critics to mean lack of sincere concern for the Plan of Union in our land; by others it is calculated to mean pressure from the Parent Churches. Both these criticisms appear to me to be rather unkind and not true to facts. While unity with the brethren around us is important it does not mean that unity with those whose labour of love brought us into being is to be sacrificed or belittled. The two can co-exist. There is therefore nothing wrong in desiring or even in insisting on the continuation of old relationships while we try to create new interrelationships. It was with this end in view that the C. I. P. C. referred the matter to the Lambeth Conference for advice and for assurance that the Plan was carried into effect it may be expected that the Churches of the Anglican

Communion would be in full communion with the resulting United Churches.

Great Sympathy and Warmth

As a member of the Committee on Church Unity and the Church Universal of the Lambeth Conference which dealt with this subject I must say that the deliberations of the said Committee were marked by great sympathy and warmth. Right at the outset the Committee decided to produce a report that would be warm and would win confidence. There was goodwill, willingness to understand and help and to be as accommodative as possible. Those who were at the 1948 Lambeth Conference marvelled at this change. There was no fault-finding attitude or any desire to dictate terms; but all along there was a sincere desire on every side to be helpful. There was no uncharitableness. It may be asked whether it was not possible for the C. I. P. B. C. to go ahead with the union as in the Plan without raising at this stage the issue of communion with the Parent Church, and leaving it, as in the case of South India, to the various Anglican Provinces to formulate their attitude to the United Church in the years to come. This would have perhaps been possible but not necessarily desirable. Why wait until a future date for the achievement of that which is possible at the start?

The Committee was deeply impressed by the achievement of the Negotiators in producing the Plan in spite of the complexity of the problems involved. They were fully satisfied with the doctrinal side of the Plan and expressed their satisfaction in unequivocal terms. "The Doctrinal statements of the Plan are unexceptionable. No Anglican need entertain any doubt concerning the orthodoxy of the Faith of the resulting Churches". The Conference whole-heartedly desired that the Plan for reunion in North India and Pakistan may go forward. The change regarding the bringing together of the Episcopates in a single act which they suggested was not so much because they did not approve of the Steps that the Plan recommended, but because they were trying to answer the question which the C. I. P. B. C. had put to them. This should

be borne in mind because it is very important and would help in removing some unnecessary misunderstandings. The sincerity of the desire of the Conference that the Plan should go through and the urgency with which they considered the issue is evident from the fact that when a fear was expressed that the suggested changes may mean breakdown of the negotiations or its postponement for some years to come, the Conference requested the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a small commission of bishops to be immediately available for consultation with the C. I. P. B. C. It is most disappointing that this helpful attitude on the part of the Lambeth Conference has been wrongly read in some quarters. After all, the responsibility of arriving at the final decision will rest with the C. I. P. B. C. and not with any outside Body. We would have liked very much the Lambeth Conference to accept and bless the Plan as it is. The Conference might have done that if the C. I. P. B. C. had not asked the question the way it was asked.

Why the Request for Changes ?

Why did the Lambeth Conference find it necessary to recommend these changes in Steps 2 and 3 ? Did they just want to be nasty ? Did they desire to imply and impose their own view of episcopacy on others ? Did they want to show that the Order of Bishops was superior to the other Orders ?

According to the Plan we have already accepted the three Orders—Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons. Each of the Uniting Churches knows what she is contributing towards the formation of the New Church, and we also admit our imperfections due to the fact that we are divided. We pray to God to supply us with whatever of grace, gifts, character or authority we lack in His sight. With all this quite clear to us no one can impose his views on us. Let us set aside all prejudice and preconceived notions. Let us remember that while Lambeth would be very happy if its recommendations are incorporated into the Plan they will not stand in the way of the C. I. P. B. C. if she wanted to go ahead with the Plan as it is. There is therefore no room for blaming an outside Body. The responsibility for the final decision is entirely that of the C. I. P. B. C. The problem is not external ; it is internal.

Lambeth recommended the changes in the

unification of Ministry because they sincerely felt that "The proposals of the Plan at this point are undoubtedly confusing, and the Committee finds it extremely awkward that the bishops whose episcopates have already been brought together in the previous Act should again be involved in the course of the same service in an Act which provides practically an identical prayer." To us there may seem no obscurity at all in what we have planned; yet others who are deeply interested and concerned in the matter have shown what to them appears obscure. Repetition of a few words in a prayer or a formula may not appear a very serious matter at all, and yet if it is possible to remove it why not find a way to do so.

The Aim is Union

What we are aiming at is union. At what point in the service is this aim fulfilled ? According to the Service proposed for use at the inauguration *the United Church is declared to come into existence prior to the unification either of the episcopates or of the Ministry* when the Presiding Minister makes the following declaration :—

"Dearly beloved, in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, Who on the night of His betrayal prayed that His disciples might be one ; and by authority of the governing bodies of the uniting Churches, whose resolutions have been read in your hearing and laid in prayer before Almighty God, I do hereby declare that these seven Churches, namely,..... within the area of union are become one united Church of North India/Pakistan".

The problem has arisen because while according to the Plan, the unification of the Ministry is the primary thing and the bringing together of the episcopates only a preliminary, according to the Lambeth suggestions the two episcopates are to be brought together in a single Act in which representative ministers from the other uniting Churches will be taking part in the laying on of hands on the bishops and this will then be followed by the unification of the ministry in which the bishops have already been brought together will be involved only in that part which concerns the extension of their authority to the entire united Church.

Judging from what one reads and hears these suggestions for improving the procedure

em to be acceptable to a majority either as they are or with very minor modifications. This is very encouraging, and it is to be hoped that those who have so far tended to read in the Lambeth suggestions motives that are not true will be able to view the situation in an unbiased way. We will also do well to remember that these changes will be made use of only once and thereafter they will serve as documents of the past with no significance for the day to day life in the united Church. We are then going to waste our precious time higgling over that which will soon be a thing of the past and thereby delay that which we are all most anxious to put into effect as soon as practicable?

The Episcopal Synod of the C. I. P. B. C. at its meeting held at Allahabad in December 1958 considered this matter. It is now their problem. The Decisions of the Synod have already been made public. These call for a few modifications in the procedural part of the Plan. We hope that this will not mean a dilemma, but that a way will be found out for it.

No Discouragement

I am not at all dismayed that things have taken this turn. It has helped us to know one another's minds better. As a member of the Lambeth Conference and of the Committee that dealt with the subject of Church Union I can say this much with confidence that both the Committee and the Conference were actuated with a sincere desire to help the C.I.P.B.C. I as an individual am most anxious to see the Church Union carried into effect and I ardently hope and pray that adjustments will be made in the Plan so as to incorporate these suggestions. But, and it is a very big "BUT", if the Negotiating Committee find it impossible to deviate from its chalked out path then the C.I.P.B.C. will have to decide what the next step should be. Let us pray that the right guidance may be granted to these who, will be seeking a solution to this problem so that in their decision none may find offence, all may have cause for rejoicing and that we may all be one even as the Father and the Son are one.

The Unification of the Ministry

Amended Form of the Proposal by the Episcopal Synod of the C. I. P. B. C.

N. B. In order to make clear the significance of their proposal the Episcopal Synod have set out in full the paragraphs of the Plan as they would read, if amended. We do not here print their paragraphs numbered 4-10 as these are identical with the Plan as it stands, Part II, paras 7-12 and 13. The whole section, including these portions would be inserted in place of the existing Plan, Part II, paras 4-19 (pp 52-58) and should be read with the Plan open for comparison. Ed.

The Declaration.

11. The bishops and representative presbyters shall declare their assent to the Plan of Church Union and their acceptance of the constitution of the Church of North India/Pakistan, and with one voice shall say:

In the conviction that God wills one Communion and Fellowship of all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, believing myself to have been duly and fully ordained in the ... Church to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Church of God, am humbly prepared to commit myself to God and through the laying-on of hands with prayer to receive

from Him such grace, commission and authority as it may be His Will to bestow upon me for my ministry in the Church of God within the Church of North India/Pakistan.

The Preface.

12. The good hand of God being upon us, these several Churches now brought together into visible unity as part of the Universal Church, with an agreed basis of faith and order, desire by this Act and through the grace and mercy of God to bring about the unification of the sacred ministry in the Church of North India/Pakistan. In so doing it is the intention of this Church to continue

and reverently to use and esteem the three-fold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon.

13. These Churches in uniting mutually acknowledge each other's ministries as ministries of Christ in His Word and Sacraments, and acknowledge that all their ministries have been in God's providence manifestly used by the Holy Spirit in His work of enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints, and acknowledge that owing to their divisions, all their ministries are limited in scope and authority, not having the seal of the whole Church. They therefore accept the principle of the unification of the ministry by the mutual laying-on of hands in a solemn act of humility and re-dedication with Prayer. In this act they seek the grace of God for the wider and more effectual fulfilment of their ministry.

Each Church is presenting before God its whole ministry, in the case of Episcopal Churches, bishops and representatives of its presbyters, and in the case of the Churches where the 'episcopate' has been embodied in the presbytery or presbyters, representatives of the presbyters.

And seeing that there has been this tradition of 'episcopate' in these other Churches, representative presbyters from among those formerly belonging to these Churches are sharing in the laying-on of hands on the bishops as well as in the laying-on of hands on the presbyters which follows.

14. (a) The Churches before uniting agreed that the 'Episcopate' shall be both constitutional and historic, and the Constitution of the Church defines that 'historic' here means 'the Episcopate which is in historic continuity with that of the early Church'. Through this Act the Church of North India and the Church of Pakistan in fulfilment of this agreement desire and intend to secure for the former bishops of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon and the former bishops of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia authority to minister and discharge the duties of their office throughout the Churches of North India and Pakistan in such a manner that no member thereof may have cause to question their authority, or to entertain any doubt or scruple in recognizing and acknowledging them as bishops in the Church of God.

(b) In particular the Church of North India and the Church of Pakistan, remembering the historical circumstances which led to the establishment of a separate Episcopate in the Methodist Church in America, intend through this Act and by the grace of God on the one hand to supply to the former bishops of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia the special link with the Episcopate of the primitive Church which the Anglican Communion claims to have preserved, and on the other hand to enable the former bishops of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon to enter into the spiritual heritage of the episcopal branch of the Methodist Communion.

15. Similarly in the Act which follows that for the bishops, the representative presbyters of each of the Churches now unite seek through the laying-on of hands such additional authority as they lacked in separation.

While recognising that there may be different interpretations of this rite, deriving from different Church traditions, it is agreed that the use of this rite does not imply denial of the reality of the ordination previously received by those now seeking to become presbyters in the united Church; is not reordination; not is it presumed to bestow again the grace, character or authority that have already been bestowed upon them.

16. The laying-on of hands is adopted as a scriptural and traditional symbol of the bestowing of spiritual gifts by God; and the uniting Churches intend by prayer and the laying-on of hands to seek from God for their ministers whatever of the fulness of Christ's grace, commission and authority each may need for the performance of his proper office in the Church of North India/Pakistan.

17. In particular they believe that God will assuredly so answer their prayers that any difference between ministers not hitherto episcopally ordained and those already so ordained will be thus transcended, and thereby such transcending of this and other differences, as they are known to God Himself, the Church of North India/Pakistan will receive from Him at the outset a ministry fully and without exception accredited in the eyes of all its members, and, so far as may be of the Church throughout the world.

the Prayer and Words.

18. (a) The Prayer used before the laying-on of hands on the bishops, and the laying-on of hands upon the presbyters, shall be as follows, the appropriate name for the office being used :—

O Almighty Father, Everlasting God, Who Thine infinite goodness hast given Thine only and dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to our Redeemer, and the Author of everlasting life; Who, after that He had made perfect our redemption by His death, and as ascended into heaven, poured out His gift abundantly upon men, making some postles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, to the edifying and making perfect His Church; continue, we beseech Thee, Thy blessings already granted to these Thy servants called this day, a fresh dedication to Thy service, and on all of them pour out Thy Holy Spirit to enrich each according to his need with grace and authority for the office of a bishop/presbyter in the Church of God and within the Church of North India or Pakistan, that they may ever be ready to spread abroad Thy Gospel, the glad tidings of reconciliation with Thee, to minister the Word of Thy truth, and administer the Sacraments which Thou hast ordained, and to use the authority given them, not to destruction but to salvation; not to hurt, but to help; so that as wise and faithful servants, giving to Thy family their portion in due season, they may be at last received into everlasting joy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who with thee and the Holy Spirit ever liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end.

18. (b) The Words to be used at the laying-on of hands shall be :

Forasmuch as thou wast called and ordained within the.....Church to the ministry of the Church of God, and art now called to the ministry of the Church of God within the Church of North India/Pakistan, mayest thou receive from God the power of the Holy Spirit to continue in thee His gifts, and in accordance with His will to bestow on thee grace, commission and authority for the ministry of a bishop/presbyter of the Church of God and within this Church; and take

thou authority to preach the Word of God, to fulfil the ministry of reconciliation and to administer Christ's sacraments in the Church of North India/Pakistan; and see that thou do all these things in brotherly partnership with God's fellow-workers whom in this union of Churches He has made thine.

The Method.

19. The method shall be as follows :—

(a) The appointed minister shall read The Preface.

(b) A selected layman of each of the former Churches now united shall present the ministers of that Church and certify that they have signed the Declaration of the Assent to the Plan and Acceptance of the Constitution. The ministers shall then recite together the Declaration (11 above).

(c) A bishop of one episcopal Church shall recite the Prayer, and, with other bishops of his Church and one presbyter of each of the non-episcopal Churches, shall lay hands on the bishops of the other episcopal Church. The procedure shall be repeated for the bishops of the other episcopal Church.

(d) A bishop shall then recite the Prayer over the representative presbyters.

(e) One representative minister from each of the Churches now united, including the bishop who recited the Prayer, will lay hands on three presbyters, who have been chosen beforehand, using the form of words prescribed in para 18 (b) above. These representative ministers will then rejoin their delegations.

(f) The representative presbyters from each of the Churches now united will then have hands laid on them by the bishop and the three presbyters mentioned in (e), who shall use the form of words prescribed in 18(b) above.

Then will follow paras 20 seq., changing (E) in the heading to 'D', and 'F' to 'E', and changing "the Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry" to 'The Representative Act for the Unification of the Ministry' wherever it occurs.

It may be noticed that

- (a) The changes are mainly in arrangement, with a minimum of change in the actual wording.
 (b) The following key indicates what has happened—

<i>New para</i>	<i>Old para</i>	:	<i>New para</i>	<i>Old para</i>	:	<i>New para</i>	<i>Old para</i>
4	7	:	10	16	:	16	14
5	8	:	11	17	:	17	15
6	9	:	12	Services p.7	:	18(a)	5
7	10	:	13	11,12	:	18(b)	18
8	11,12	:	14	4	:	19	19
9	12	:	15	12,13	:		

Omitted Old 4(c), which is mostly in old 15 ; and old 6.

Amended Old 5 (middle of the Prayer), old 12, divided and repeated, and old expanded.

Newly added New 13 last sentence—to make clear that presbyters join the laying-on of hands.

New 15 first sentence, to mark transition from bishops to presbyters (from old 12).

New 18 (a) to (d) to clarify procedure.

- (c) The Preface (conflated) is read once for all, bishops and presbyters.
 (d) The feature that each Church is presenting its whole ministry is retained, along with the separate stages of the unification, first of episcopate and then of presbyterate.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Isle of Whithorn,
 Scotland.

2nd. April, 1959.

Dear Sir,

The Rev. W. G. Young in his letter published in the issue of February, 1959, says that my suggestion "still treats the non-Anglican Presbyterate as though it is on a level with the Anglican one, and did not have episcopal functions." I venture to maintain, on the contrary, that my suggestion clearly recognizes that distinction, and seeks to assert it at the appropriate time. It is precisely because the pre-union Presbyterian Presbyter is not on a level with the pre-union Anglican Presbyter and because after the union their functions will be the same, that I think the procedure I have suggested would be fitting.

The Presbyter of a Presbyterian Church exercises functions of *Episcopo* corporately

through Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly, as well as through his office as parish minister. The Plan of Union to a large extent continues these episcopal functions to the Presbyter of the Church of North India/Pakistan, co-ordinating them with the functions of the diocesan Bishop which are defined in the constitution of the Church. What would be taking place, if the slight modification of the inaugural service that we have suggested were adopted, would be that the three different forms in which the episcopal functions have been exercised in the separate Churches would be brought together, with prayer for God's grace to combine their working in a true spiritual unity. The laying-on of hands by the representatives of the formerly non-Anglican

presbyters on the heads of the hitherto Anglican and Methodist Bishops would symbolize that amalgamation of the hitherto diverse methods of exercising the *Episcopate* which is being brought about through the Union.

The separate Churches will have been united into the Church of North India/Pakistan by the first step of the Inauguration service. The remaining steps are designed to bring the Ministers of the new united Church to the ordered system which the Plan of Union has delineated. All this is done with appropriate liturgical procedure and in the confidence that it is God who is uniting us.

As we try to envisage the Ministry of the Church of North India/Pakistan which is to be, we do not think of Presbyterianism, Anglicanism, Methodism or Congregationalism but of a truly catholic Ministry that lends in a spiritually effective way the essential values of these four traditions. If the union is achieved and our hopes for the Church of North India/Pakistan are fulfilled, we shall, in the providence of God, see a real "dying to live." In losing their traditional particularity the uniting Churches will, in the wider fullness of the united Church, find themselves. Their particular traditions will each continue as vital elements in the organization of Church life as set forth in the Plan of Union. In its ordered comprehensiveness the Plan gives proper scope to representative conciliar government, to congregational responsibility, to pastoral guidance and care through bishops, presbyters, deacons and elders, to the services of laymen, to the teaching of the Word and observance of the sacraments, and to the outreach that seeks to bring the knowledge and love of God to meet the world's need.

It is in such a context that the particular traditions which are both losing and finding themselves in the Union are to be seen. The Plan says that the ministries of all the uniting Churches "have been manifestly used by the Holy Spirit." If the Plan reaches its due fruition, it will be because through it God is preparing for His service a potentially better instrument, a Church more adequate to the challenges and opportunities of today, one that will maintain the vital Reformation principles, and be enriched in life and thought by the treasured experience of the different traditions blended together in its unity.

At Step I of the Inaugural Service the Plan of Union will have been adopted and the Churches united in accordance with the Constitution set forth therein. The Plan provides for the diffused exercise of *Episcopate* characteristic of the formerly non-episcopal Churches, as well as for the exercise of it in the form of bishops. At Step II the formerly Anglican and Methodist bishops are being co-ordinated to serve as bishops in the Church of North India/Pakistan. At that point the non-Anglican and non-M.C.S.A. presbyters shed their distinction from the presbyters who formerly functioned in an episcopal system. It is therefore fitting that at that point liturgical expression should be given to the fact that the third form of *Episcopate*, in addition to the Anglican and Methodist forms, is being merged into the life of the new united Church.

Participation at that point in the laying-on of hands by representatives of the Presbyters of the formerly non-episcopal Churches would symbolize and liturgically express this merging, and we could dispense with the repetition of the laying-on of hands on the bishops' heads, without any apprehension that it might be implied that the formerly non-Anglican presbyters did not have episcopal functions.

The mutual acknowledgment of each others' ministries and the terms of the Constitution under which the Churches are to unite imply that the form of *Episcopate* exercised in the non-episcopal Churches is being incorporated into the united Church. I think it would be satisfactory if that were made explicit at the Inauguration Service in the way I have suggested, and also if the awkwardness of the repetition of the laying-on of hands could be avoided. But if modification of the Inauguration Service at this stage would cause delay in the achievement of union, then I agree with Mr. Young in hoping that the C.I.P.B.C. will not press the matter. Better that the awkwardness be endured and the implicit recognition of functions accepted as sufficient, than that there be any further delay in the attainment of the union of the Churches.

Yours sincerely,

James Kellock

Ahmedabad 6.

19th. March, 1959.

Dear Sir,

On page 12 of your February issue, the Rajpur Conference on Church Union is reported as having issued the following comment on the fear expressed by some people that the 'laying on of hands' in the unification of the ministry is really re-ordination :

Reply : The negotiators—responsible, honest, dedicated persons—have again and again unanimously said the 'laying on of hands' in the unification of the ministry is not re-ordination, and the Plan specifically affirms that it is not. Numbers 13 and 14 declaring 'The Intention' of 'The Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry' contain the following statements: "...it is not re-ordination; nor is it presumed to bestow again the grace, gifts, character or authority that have already been bestowed upon them (ministers). The laying on of hands is adopted as a scriptural and traditional symbol of the bestowing of spiritual gifts by God; and the uniting Churches intend by prayer and the laying on of hands to seek from God for their ministers whatever of the fulness of Christ's grace, commission and authority each may need for the performance of his proper office in the Church of North India/Pakistan" (Plan p. 56).

The implication of this comment is that the proposed act of unification of the ministry is something entirely unconnected with ordination, and the fact that certain features of it are extremely similar to what is done at an ordination is a mere coincidence which need cause nobody any concern. But that is a misconception, unfortunately rather widespread, which ought to be corrected in such a responsible periodical as "Church Union."

The comment of the Rajpur Conference is correct as far as it goes, but it unfortunately refrains from mentioning the following important points :

(a) Paragraph 15 (Plan, pp. 56-7), which immediately follows the sentences quoted in the comment, states, "In particular they believe that God will assuredly so answer their prayers that any difference between

ministers not hitherto episcopally ordained and those already so ordained will be transcended...". This means that the proposed act is designed to be of such a kind that, in the eyes of those who regard episcopal ordination as essential, it will supply what is lacking to ministers who have not hitherto been episcopally ordained. This is why it is necessary for the act to include certain features extremely similar to what is done at an episcopal ordination. It is a coincidence, but a provision made by the negotiators in full knowledge of what they were doing.

(b) The Plan does indeed state that the act "is not re-ordination", but it is a matter of history that some years ago the General Assembly of the U. C. N. I. requested the Negotiating Committee to put an end to doubts by inserting the words "it is neither ordination nor re-ordination," and this request was refused. It is clear, therefore, that the negotiators have found it necessary deliberately to leave open the possibility of interpreting the act as an ordination. If this possibility had not been left open, those who regard episcopal ordination as essential would have been unable to approve of the Plan. (They can, of course, agree that the act is re-ordination, for re-ordination could apply only to those who had already once been validly ordained, and, in the eyes of those who regard episcopal ordination as essential, the ministers of non-episcopal Churches have not yet been validly ordained at all).

(c) The words *valid*, *validly* and *validity* are conspicuously absent from the Plan, say "conspicuously absent", because they are the special terms used, by those who regard episcopal ordination as essential, to describe ordinations in which they see an essential defect. The negotiators had to avoid applying these terms to the ordinations and ministries of the present non-episcopal Churches, because they would have been unacceptable to those who regard episcopal ordination as essential. Equally they had to avoid applying them simply to the future ministry of the united Church as it will be after the act of unification, because it might seem to imply a lack of "validity" in the present ministries of the non-episcopal Churches.

Churches, which of course do not acknowledge any such lack. Therefore, very sensibly, these "key words" of modern controversy are omitted altogether.

To sum up, the whole Plan, and in particular the act of unification of the ministry, is based on the principle that all the uniting churches belong to God, depend on Him and are ruled by Him. We all acknowledge that He alone knows what each of us needs, and He alone can give each of us what we need. Therefore the negotiators, with scrupulous and devoted care, have included nothing which would necessarily exclude the sincere convictions of any who desire to enter the union. Naturally this means that many of us do not find our own convictions explicitly stated in the Plan, because that would automatically exclude some whose convictions are different. But none of us are required by the Plan to state or assent to anything which contradicts our fundamental convictions. What we are all asked to do is to submit to God, and to allow Him to do for us what He sees we need, so that He may bring us into a deeper and fuller unity than we could ever achieve if we each insisted that our own point of view must be accepted by all.

Therefore, I believe, the right reply to people who fear that the laying on of hands in the unification of the ministry is really re-ordination would be something like the following: "Yes, the act of unification is deliberately designed in such a way that it may be interpreted as episcopal ordination by those who regard such ordination as essential. But, really, it is deliberately designed so that those who regard non-episcopal ordination as

valid and sufficient may interpret the act as a re-commissioning and extension of authority, involving neither ordination nor re-ordination. Equal scope is given to both parties to hold to their conscientious convictions. Nobody could argue that the convictions of both parties are equally right. But we believe that God's primary command to His Church is not to spend time arguing which of our parties is right, but rather to unite in submitting to Him. The act of unification of the ministry provides a means by which all our Churches may do this, joyfully and hopefully, even though we know that some of those who unite with us have convictions very different from our own."

Yours sincerely,

T. H. Lyle.

Editorial Note: While grateful to Mr. Lyle for correctly pointing out the clear intention of the Plan to leave room for those who sincerely believe that the gift of God which is essential for the proper ministry is conveyed through episcopal laying on of hands, it is well to remember that for most of us, of different traditions, it is the positive intention expressed in the following words of the Plan which have seemed to be satisfying and inclusive:

"...the uniting Churches intend by prayer and the laying-on of hands to seek from God for their ministers whatever of the fullness of Christ's grace, commission and authority each may need for the performance of his proper office in the Church of North India/Pakistan" (Plan, Part II, Para. 14). —Ed.

NEWS

MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE

A meeting of the working Committee, which was empowered by the Negotiating Committee to take necessary decisions on matters which might arise before final decisions are taken on the Plan of Union, was held at Allahabad early in February, 1959. It had before it primarily the Anglican request that the Negotiating Committee consider proposals

to modify the procedure for unifying the ministry, proposals for changes made by the Methodist Church in Southern Asia and a memorandum on questions relating to Baptism from the negotiating Baptist Churches.

Amendments to the Plan

The Working Committee took note of the fact that, since April 1957, the various negotiating bodies have been asked to give their vote on the plan as it stands, in the Third

Edition. It is this Edition which has been translated and published in various languages, which the Churches have been studying and on which some votes have actually been taken. No provision was made for further amendment at this stage, though Churches accepting the Plan as a whole were at liberty to ask for consideration of changes which might be made by the Synod *after union*. Even to consider amendments now could not but be most confusing for everyone concerned.

It was, however, noted that the main amendment proposed by the Anglican Church concerned the actual procedure at the moment of Union, contained in Part II of the Plan. Any change which is made here must be made *before* Union if it is made at all. Other changes can indeed be considered afterwards, but not this one.

In the light of this clarification, the Working Committee decided to ask for the following procedure to be followed:

i. Churches should continue, according to the decision of the Negotiating Committee, to consider and vote on the Plan as it stands;

ii. Churches should, however, be requested to give their verdict in two parts, corresponding to Parts I and II of the Plan, i.e. they should state (a) whether Part I, the proposed constitution of the United Church, is acceptable to them, and (b) whether or not they are prepared to enter the Union according to the procedure for inauguration proposed in Part II.

iii. The various Church Union committees of the Churches concerned are further asked, if possible, to indicate to the Negotiating Committee how they think that their Church's decision on part II would be affected if the revision proposed by the Anglican Church were accepted. This indication is requested if possible not later than the end of August.

iv. It is proposed that the Negotiating Committee be called to deal with the ques-

tion, in the light of information received early in December 1959.

Since it became clear that there was a question of a general reopening of discussion on the Plan at this stage, the changes proposed by the Methodist Church were not pressed. Further information about them is awaited.

Problems relating to Baptism

The Working Committee has requested a special committee, which was appointed to give further study to questions relating to Baptism, to meet during the current year. In this connection it called attention to the useful material on the subject which has appeared in *Church Union: News and Views*. It further decided to take advantage of the return to India of the Rev. E. L. Wenger to add him to the Committee.

SUB-COMMITTEE ON DIOCESES

The Rev. Dr. K. Yohan Masih, having asked that he might be relieved of responsibility for the sub-committee on dioceses, the Working Committee has appointed Mr. Adhikari, 95 A Elliott Road, Calcutta 16, to carry on this important work. Mr. Adhikari will particularly welcome all criticisms and suggestions which may be made in any area regarding the draft schedule of dioceses which appears on pp. 61-64 of the *Plan of Union*. He further requests that Church authorities will give him accurate statistics of the membership, organised churches and ordained ministers of the various Churches.

It is fitting to underline once more the fact that the list of Dioceses so far prepared is tentative only, and that the Sub-Committee concerned will warmly welcome the help which can be given only by regional conferences in the various areas, which are requested to try to formulate detailed proposals on the most suitable boundaries for their dioceses as well as for support for the diocesan organisation.

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Writers in this Issue

The Rev. C. C. Pande, Bankura, West Bengal, Chairman of the Bengal District of the Methodist Church, is Convener of the Methodist Delegation to the Negotiating Committee and is Chairman of that Committee.

The Ven'ble. Archdeacon T. D. Sully, Convener of the Anglican Delegation to the Negotiating Committee, is also Secretary of that Committee.

The Rev. E. L. Wenger, on the staff of Serampore College, West Bengal, is a member and former Convener of the Baptist Delegation to the Negotiating Committee.

The Very Revd. James Kellock, D. D., a minister of the Church of Scotland, was formerly Principal of Wilson College, Bombay and was at one time Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Church of Northern India.

The Rev. T. H. Lyle, Ahmedabad, is a missionary of the Irish Presbyterian Church and a member of the Gujerat Presbytery of the United Church of Northern India.

The Rt. Rev. A. W. Luther, is the Bishop of Nasik of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon.

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I, A. M. Barnabas, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Sd. A. M. Barnabas